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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM AND NEA

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: MONITORING AND EVALUATING PRM-FUNDED ACTIVITIES AT SEEDS OF PEACE'S COEXISTENCE CENTER IN JERUSALEM

REF: A)02 STATE 148171

B)02 AMMAN 05823

¶11. SUMMARY: REGIONAL REFCOORD ASSISTANT MET WITH SEEDS OF PEACE'S COEXISTENCE CENTER OFFICIALS JANUARY 27 TO MONITOR PRM-FUNDED ACTIVITIES AT THE JERUSALEM CENTER FOR COEXISTENCE. ALTHOUGH POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO IMPEDE DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN SEEDS, SOP HAS MANAGED TO CONDUCT CREATIVE COEXISTENCE PROGRAMMING. SOP STAFF MET PALESTINIAN SEEDS IN THEIR TOWNS, HELD A SEMINAR AND A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT IN JERICHO FOR PALESTINIAN SEEDS, HELD MEETINGS FOR PARENTS OF THE ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN SEEDS IN ISRAEL AS WELL AS COEXISTENCE MEETINGS FOR ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN RESIDENTS OF JERUSALEM, AND MAINTAINED A SOP WEBSITE AND MAGAZINE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNITIES. END SUMMARY.

¶12. Regional RefCoord Assistant met with Seeds of Peace's Coexistence Center Program Director Ned Lazarus and Senior Program Officer Jen Marlowe January 27 to monitor PRM-funded activities at the Jerusalem Center for Coexistence. Because the political and the security situation on the ground has not changed since our last report (ref b), Seeds of Peace continues to face difficulties in bringing together Israeli and Palestinian Seeds for coexistence activities. Nevertheless, Seeds of Peace maintained communication links between Israeli and Palestinian youth through chatting on the Seeds of Peace (SOP) website and writing to the SOP bi-annual Olive Branch magazine. Through these activities, Palestinian and Israeli Seeds also develop their writing skills and learn international perspectives on other relevant issues through virtual contact with Seeds from 23 different countries.

¶13. In spite of travel restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza, 90 of the 116 Seeds who participated in the SOP summer camp 2002 managed to meet regularly in different locations. Israeli and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem held their meetings at the Seeds Center in Jerusalem, while Arab and Jewish Israelis met in northern and southern Israel. Since Palestinian participants from the West Bank and Gaza could not move out of their towns, Lazarus and Marlowe conducted regional check-in meetings with the Seeds in their towns -- Ramallah, Beit Jala, Abu Dis, Nablus and Gaza -- to share what they have been facing in recent months, how they have met the challenges they confront, what discourages and inspires them, and how to stay connected to the other Seeds, to the organization and to each other.

¶14. Marlowe and Lazarus reported that social pressures have made it difficult for some Palestinian Seeds to continue their coexistence activities. Those in Gaza were not able to talk with the Palestinian community at all about their activities in the SOP, while others in Ramallah and Nablus were less restricted. Nevertheless, Palestinians showed commitment to the program, attending town hall meetings and expressing their willingness to continue working with the values and culture of Seeds of Peace. Lazarus said that the SOP values become part of the Seeds' identity.

¶15. In order to compensate for the difficult circumstances, Seeds of Peace also went beyond its traditional approach of meetings between the Seeds themselves by holding unilateral and joint Israeli-Palestinian meetings for the Seeds parents and families. Seeds held joint Hanukah and Ramadan celebrations, gathering 150 Seeds and their families for an evening of `oud music and food, forging trusting connections between the parents. Seeds of Peace also held a seminar on community activism in Jericho, where Palestinian Seeds heard from panels of their peers and professionals about meaningful ways to contribute to their community that are consistent with the values of Seeds of Peace. The seminar was followed by a voluntary project at a school in the Ein el-Sultan refugee camp, where the Seeds painted a new UNRWA school building. 60 Seeds from Gaza and the West Bank as well Palestinians studying in Jordan participated in that event.

¶16. According to Lazarus and Marlowe, Seeds of Peace intends to apply for another PRM grant to send 10 refugee children to its 2003 summer camp in Maine. Seeds would like to give priority to refugees from the Palestinian camps in the West

Bank and Gaza, but continued travel restrictions could make this difficult. SOP management is therefore considering expanding its program to Palestinian residents of refugee camps in Jordan.

17. ConGen Jerusalem cleared this cable.

GNEHM